

As part of their continuing war against the average American, House Republicans today passed H.R. 6, the **Energy Policy Act of 2005**. Congressman Jesse Jackson, Jr., said, "The Energy Bill reflects the Republicans' highest moral value - corporate priorities. It's pork-ridden, anti-consumer and anti-environment. It doesn't resolve our energy problems and actually makes them worse. It does nothing to lift the growing economic burden from average working-and middle-class families, and represents just about everything that's wrong with the entrenched leadership in Washington."

Congressman Jackson also said, "The best thing this bill does is help Republicans change the subject from Majority Leader Tom DeLay's ethical problems. What better way to do that than to pass an alleged energy bill while gas prices are soaring?

"With inflation rising, interest rates rising, the cost of a tank of gas rising, wages failing to keep up with the cost of living, and the stock market on a roller coaster, Congress has been consumed with Terri Schiavo, so-called 'judicial tyranny,' and Tom DeLay's ethical lapses. What's the conservatives' big solution? A deceptive media strategy to change the subject! Pass an energy bill designed specifically to shift attention from Tom DeLay's ethical failures to win energy headlines at a time when gas prices are at an all-time high.

"One provision of the bill - strongly supported by the House Majority Leader DeLay - shields the manufacturers of a dangerous gasoline additive from lawsuits stemming from the contamination of drinking water. Its manufacturers have long known the additive methyl tertiary butyl ether (or MTBE) is a powerful pollutant. Even in low doses it makes water undrinkable. In higher doses it causes cancer. H.R. 6 also includes a long-awaited gift to big oil interests: opening up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to drilling. Not only will this be environmentally devastating but the expected returns are minimal - a wait of 10 years to produce 1 or 2 percent of Americans' daily consumption. DeLay's influence is also clearly felt in another provision that would bypass Congress's normal spending process to funnel up to \$2 billion to oil and gas firms to explore in the Gulf of Mexico. Even as the energy bill was being debated on the House floor DeLay was reportedly the recipient of a \$2,000-to-\$5,000-a-plate fundraiser thrown by the energy firm Fluor, which has been actively lobbying for this legislation.

"Finally, the new energy bill, crafted by Republican corporate sponsors, contains next-to-nothing to promote reduced energy use or renewable energy sources. Its major purpose is to protect energy company profits," Jackson concluded.